

8 Reasons not to be anxious

By

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Emotions and attitudes › Life Issues

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Many people feel worried about all kinds of things. But Jesus tells us: “ Do not be anxious about your life ” (Matthew 6:25). He gives us several good reasons not to worry.

1. If you are anxious, your priorities need adjusting

Jesus says you cannot serve God and money or possessions at the same time (Matthew 6:24). If we worry about all kinds of earthly things, this shows that our hearts are more focused on those things than on God. That is a serious statement. Jesus’ words teach us that being anxious is not just wrong for ourselves, it is a sign that our priorities in life are out of balance, that we worry too much about “ treasures on earth ” instead of “ treasures in heaven ”. Seen in this light, anxiousness is not merely wrong, but sinful! Have you ever considered anxiousness in this light?

2. Life is more important than food

Food and clothing belong to our basic necessities and can take up much of our time, money and attention. They can easily turn into a cause for anxiety. But Jesus points out that it's actually illogical to be anxious about food and clothing, for “ life is more than food and the body is more than clothing ” (Matthew 6:25). Since the Lord God is the source and fountain of life, wouldn't He also care for food to sustain the life He created? Since He formed our bodies “ fearfully and wonderfully ” (see Psalm 139:13-14), wouldn't He also care about clothing? When we are anxious, we tend to focus on what troubles us. Jesus urges us to see things in a heavenly perspective.

3. You are of more value than the birds

Besides logical thinking about life being more important than food and the body being more important than clothing, Jesus tells us to look around us. Nature offers us many examples of God's goodness and faithfulness. “ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ” (Matthew

6:26). We find a similar line of thought in the book of Job: “ Ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you... In [God’s] hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind ” (Job 12:7-10).

Well, Jesus says, if God cares for the birds, would He not care for you? After all, “ you are of more value than many sparrows ” (Luke 12:7).

4. Anxiousness doesn’t help you

Many people want to live a long life. Some go to great lengths to adopt a healthy life style and scientists search for ways to increase people’s lifespan and prevent aging. But being anxious about your life won’t help you to live longer. “ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ” (Matthew 6:27). In other words, it does not make sense to worry. It’s pointless.

5. You are of more value than a flower of the field

Once more, Jesus turns our attention to nature: “ And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the

field grow... Not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ” (Matthew 26:28-29). Clearly, these plants have not made an effort to look good. Moreover, grasses are not particularly valuable. They are cut down to serve as fuel, or they are easily smashed by a storm. It is not worth paying much attention to such field flowers, we would think. And yet they look beautiful! More beautiful than the richest king in Israel’s history, King Solomon. God Himself “ clothes them. ” He gives them their beauty, even if they only bloom for one day. From this example, Jesus asks the question, “ Will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ” (Matthew 6:30).

6. Believers have a loving Father in heaven

In Matthew 6:31-32, Jesus mentions another reason not to be anxious. If you are constantly worrying about food or clothing, you are like someone who does not know God. You act as if you don’t have a Father in heaven who has promised to take care of you! In fact, that is a gross insult to Him. Consciously or unconsciously, you distrust His goodness and omnipotence. Yet we are called again

and again to cast all our anxieties on Him, because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). And Jesus Himself teaches us to pray, “Our Father in heaven ... Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:9-11).

Jesus adds another promise. If we focus on God’s Kingdom and His righteousness, He will give us what we need (Matthew 6:33). What that is exactly, our heavenly Father knows better than anyone else! Do you trust God as your loving Father?

7. Each day has enough trouble of its own

An old poem, probably written by Thomas Chatterton in the 18th century, goes as follows:

Too often we suffer most sorely
and thereby feel most poorly
from dreaded aches and pains.

This poem may well be inspired by Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:34: “ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow,

for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. ”

We have a lot to deal with sometimes. It is foolish to add worries for the future to our daily burden. This is simply too much and prevents us from enjoying the good we receive from God’s hand today. We would collapse under the burden if we would take on the cares for an entire week, month or year in one single day. Not only is it impossible to bear the burdens of the future today, it is also unnecessary. For God is in control of the future — just as much as the present. We can entrust our future to His care.

8. Anxiousness can distract us from the most important thing

When Jesus was traveling through Israel, a woman named Martha welcomed Him and His disciples into her house. This was a good thing to do. Hospitality in general is praised in the Bible, and opening your home to Jesus Christ is a very special opportunity to serve Him! Martha took this very seriously. She was busy with all the

preparations that had to be made for such a large group of guests. In fact, she was so “anxious and troubled about many things” that she forgot to listen to Jesus’ words. She did not have enough time and peace of mind to sit down and take some “quiet time”. Jesus gently rebuked her for this: “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary.” (Luke 10:41-42)

Martha’s anxieties distracted her from the one thing that was most important. While serving the Lord, she forgot to actually listen to Him. Her story is a warning for us, too. If you love Jesus and make it a priority to serve Him in various ways, pay attention that your service does not make you “anxious and troubled”. Do not let “many things” prevent you from spending time with the Lord and listening to His words!

Practical advice: battling anxiety by prayer

In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle Paul shared valuable advice on how to battle anxiety. He was probably speaking from experience, since he was imprisoned for

his faith and awaiting trial! No matter what happens, Paul says, we can tell God about everything and leave our worries and requests in His hands (Philippians 4:6). If we do so, “ the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus ” (Philippians 4:7).

This peace of God can be experienced when we are united with Christ Jesus, and it is an effective protection against anxiety. As Jesus told His disciples, “ I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world ” (John 16:33).

Do you experience peace when you have brought your concerns to God?

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